

Japan will be there. After all, Japan is an important part of the neighborhood. South Korea will be there. They've had a vested interest in having discussions and dialogs with Kim Chong-il. And Russia has agreed to join, which means there are now five nations in North Korea sitting at a table, all aimed at convincing—the discussions will be all aimed at convincing Mr. Kim Chong-il to change his attitude about nuclear weaponry.

In the past, it was the lone voice of the United States speaking clearly about this. Now we'll have other parties who have got a vested interest in peace on the Korean Peninsula. And so I would say the progress is being—is good progress. And we're upbeat about the fact that others are assuming responsibility for peace besides the United States of America. And we'll see how the

dialog goes. We fully understand the past. We are hopeful, however, that Mr. Kim Chong-il, because he's hearing other voices, will make the decision to totally dismantle his nuclear weapons program, that he will allow there to be complete transparency and verifiability. And we're optimistic that that can happen.

Listen, thank you all for coming. For those of you in Crawford, I will see you—going to Crawford, I will see you soon. As you can tell, I got my summer buzz. [*Laughter*] I'm ready to get down there and enjoy the weather.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and President Hu Jintao of China.

## Statement on Senate Action To Block Votes on Judicial Nominations *August 1, 2003*

This week, a minority of Senators continued to filibuster highly qualified judicial nominees who enjoy the support of a majority of Senators. These obstructionist tactics are unprecedented, unfair, and unfaithful to the Senate's constitutional responsibility to vote on judicial nominees.

These highly qualified nominees have stellar records that represent the mainstream of American law and values and strong bipartisan support from those who know them best. Instead of allowing an up-or-down vote, a minority of Senators have been filibustering Miguel Estrada for nearly 5 months and Priscilla Owen for 3 months and are now obstructing the nomination of Bill Pryor. The failure to hold votes on these nominations not only is inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional responsibility but also has caused extended judicial

vacancies that are harmful to the American judicial system.

Every judicial nominee should receive an up-or-down vote in the full Senate, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. It is time to move past the partisan politics of the past and do what is right for the American legal system and the American people. Let each Senator vote how he or she thinks best, but give the nominees a vote.

NOTE: The statement referred to Miguel A. Estrada, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit; Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit; and William H. Pryor, Jr., nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.